

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)  
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: [USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-690-4152

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> (e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)	September 30, 2014-September 29, 2016
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Establishing year-round market opportunities in Steuben County: A project to increase farm profitability and consumer access to local food.
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> (e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)	14-FMPPX-NY-0123
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Bath, NY
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$91,043

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

☒ Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

☒ Different individual: Name: Stephanie Mehlenbacher; Email: sms64@cornell.edu; Phone: 607-583-3240

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

- i. **Goal/Objective 1: *Establish a winter farmers’ market in Bath, NY to provide year round access to local agricultural products and a new market opportunity for farmers.***

- a. **Progress Made:** This market was established during the first year of the grant. After receiving feedback from vendors about the first winter, the market was moved to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of each month (rather than Tuesdays) from 2-5pm, November-March. The market had approximately 100 attendees daily on a regular basis, with 6-10 vendors each day and 243 Facebook Likes (up from 83 Likes in April 2015).

- b. **Impact on Community:** The Bath Winter Market was established to increase access to fresh, local food. The market was located within a food desert in Steuben County. This farmers’ market creates year-round local buying opportunities for Steuben County’s 98,600 residents. The Bath Farmers’ Market also increased in size and changed venue after the first season. The location of the market seemed to hinder certain products and attendance wasn’t as strong as anticipated. In 2016, the farmers’ market moved to the Bath Fire Hall near the County office building where many different public assistance programs are conducted. This increased awareness of the market to more residents of the county. The market also increased in number of producers from 5 to 14 over the course of the two year grant. The product availability became much more diverse and producers began to accept EBT/ SNAP benefits. Not only did the market increase local food access for consumers, it increased farm profitability and sustainability. Farmers participating in the market shared that overall farm profits increased due to the increased market opportunities that allowed them to sell their products all year long. Producers also shared that they noticed a 10-15% increase in farm sales when the EBT/ SNAP benefits were accepted at the markets. It was noted that the increase was slow at first and almost non-existent, however through the promotion and advertising funded through FMPP, the sales quickly picked up.

- ii. **Goal/Objective 2: *Increase farm profitability through a comprehensive local foods program. Develop a comprehensive, year-round local foods program that aims to increase marketing opportunities for farms in the region that includes but is not limited to local food celebrations, farm to restaurant, farm to B&B, farm to chef, and farmers’ market promotion.***

- a. **Progress Made:**

- Farm Guide:** The Steuben County Farm Guide was published in two editions—2015 and 2016. The 2016 guide lists 7 farmers’ markets in the county (including the winter markets), as well as 69 farms organized by category, with contact information and location on a map. The guide also includes a local harvest calendar so consumers know when New York State-grown products are in season. Nearly all of the 2015 Guides were distributed, and 40% of the 2016 guides have been distributed since its printing in July 2016, with plans to distribute the rest throughout the winter months at winter markets.

- Food Preservation:** Over 50 local residents attended a series of food preservation workshops to encourage more consumers to buy fresh local

produce directly from farms and farmers' markets. Scholarships were offered to include more LI/LA attendees, and more classes have been requested since the end of the grant period. CCE Steuben is working on collaborating with other Cooperative Extension Associations to offer a Master Food Preserver course. Attendees learned food preservation techniques such as water bath canning, pressure canning, and freezing. A meat preservation class was offered later in the season to demonstrate how residents could preserve store bought meat as well as locally harvested venison and other wild game.

**Local Foods Festival:** The Steuben County Local Foods Festival was held in 2015 and 2016, with plans to continue in 2017. Over 400 people attended the 2016 Festival. It has become a popular staple event in the Corning area during the winter months.

**Farm to Restaurant:** Eight farms, over 45 residents, and one restaurant attended a farm to restaurant event held at the summer Painted Post farmers' market in August 2016. This event increased awareness of the local food industry. Over 40 restaurants received information about the local producers and what they had to offer. Each local food producer also received information about selling to restaurants and other institutions to increase connections between local producers and restaurants.

**Farmer Training:** After recognizing the difficulties of a farmers' market operating an EBT/SNAP benefits program, CCE Steuben offered education to local producers on how to independently accept EBT/SNAP benefits on a per farm basis. Over 25 farmers attended the two meetings offered over the two-year project and the number of farms accepting benefits in the county increased from 1 to 6. This has increased EBT/SNAP sales considerably over the course of this project. These producers will continue to utilize this program and encourage other farmers to accept EBT/SNAP.

**b. Impact on Community:** All of the components of the comprehensive local foods program have allowed residents increased access to local food and improved affordability for LI/LA residents in Steuben County. CCE Steuben's SNAP-Ed Educators report anecdotal evidence of an increase in SNAP participants using benefits at the farmers' markets. The presence of winter markets in previously underserved areas, including the Local Foods Festival, has provided increased access to local foods for hundreds of residents. Farmers have reported an increase in awareness of their products through participating in the Local Foods Festival and the farmers' markets. CCE staff have witnessed an increased interest in local foods as a result of the Farm Guide, Local Foods Festival, and Food Preservation classes.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3: *Implement EBT services at two winter farmers' markets located in LI/LA areas—the existing Corning Winter Farmers' Market and the newly established Bath Winter Farmers' Market.***

**a. Progress Made:** This goal was adjusted slightly. After learning more about the requirements to administer SNAP, CCE Steuben was not able to apply for an EBT machine for the Bath VA Market as an Association. Instead, a training was organized in collaboration with the Farmers' Market Federation of NY to encourage individual farms and market managers to sign up for their own EBT machines. Two classes were hosted to help farmers transition into EBT/ SNAP sales and encourage independent

systems. After these meetings, a total of 6 producers in the county accept SNAP benefits.

**b. Impact on Community:** Supporting the local markets has increased market opportunity for producers. Many of them have reported an increase in year-round sales as a result of participating in the new and existing markets, approximately \$50 per producer per market day. These markets, and the SNAP/EBT training for producers, has resulted in increased access to local food for all residents, in particular those receiving public assistance. CCE Steuben staff, including SNAP-Ed staff, did increased SNAP outreach activities to encourage LI/LA residents to utilize SNAP benefits at farmers' markets.

**2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.**

- i. **Number of direct jobs created:** 2
- ii. **Number of jobs retained:** 0. Two part-time Local Foods Educators were hired through this grant, but sought employment elsewhere before the end of the grant period. One Educator, however, still volunteers as a Market Manager and has retained employment in the local foods sector.
- iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** 0. We have not heard of any farmers hiring permanently due to selling at the farmers' markets. However, there is some indication that jobs were retained or strengthened because of this project. One dairy began their cheese business because of the market opportunity here, which increased jobs at the processing plant that they send their milk to be made into cheese. Two very small vegetable producers with two staff each have increased their produce offerings and have had to divide their labor in order to cover all of the markets/ work on the farm, but have not hired anyone yet, as small-scale farmers typically do the work without hiring additional staff.
- iv. **Number of markets expanded:** 3
- v. **Number of new markets established:** 3. This includes the two new winter markets, and one new summer market.
- vi. **Market sales:** Increased by \$50 per producer per market and overall sales increased by 40% with the presence of new markets and expansion of existing markets. Most of the producers that participate in the markets have increased and diversified their products in order to meet demands of the customers. One producer gained a consistent restaurant sale from participating in the Corning Winter Farmers' Market.
- vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:** 19 producers have benefited from the three winter markets and Local Foods Festival, an increase of 219% (from 6 producers initially).

**3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?**

This project reached new populations & new organizations/businesses by establishing the Bath Winter Farmers' Market at the VA Medical Center, and subsequently the Bath Fire Hall. This brought in new customers, representing veterans as well as employees of the VA Medical Center, and the Steuben County Office Building. We expect to see an increase in EBT/SNAP sales at the new Winter Farmers' Market location near the County Office Building, where most LI/LA residents of the county come to receive benefits. Being more centrally located will allow producers to reach new LI/LA populations that would not have come to the VA Medical Center.

Vendors reported a 40% increase in total farm income from their participation in the winter markets, and a 30% increase in their customer base. Many vendors reported the need to increase production to meet the product demands of the new market. All three of the markets are located in USDA designated food deserts. These markets increased access to local food. When this project began, only one summer market accepted SNAP benefits. Steuben County is a rural, upstate NY county, with three USDA designated low income, low access (LI/LA) census tracts. It is reported that 12,934 people receive SNAP benefits in Steuben County. Steuben County covers roughly 1,397 square miles with a population of approximately 98,000 people living in rural agricultural areas, quaint small towns, and small city communities. It is the second largest county in New York State. Access to local food is made all the more difficult due to the sheer size of Steuben County and rural landscape. Now all three winter markets accept EBT/ SNAP benefits, and an increased number of producers at the summer and winter markets accept EBT/SNAP benefits.

**4. Discuss your community partnerships.**

**i. Who are your community partners?**

Steuben County IDA, Steuben County Planning Department, Steuben County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Committee, Bath VA Center, Bath Fire Department, Corning Chamber of Commerce, Town of Painted Post, Steuben County Public Health, Corning Visitors' Bureau.

**ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?**

All of these organizations recognize the value of the project objectives and have worked with CCE Steuben in approval of property use for markets and events, providing supporting information about land use and resources, and promoting each market to new populations.

**iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?**

All of these organizations will continue to promote the farmers' markets and the local food industry here in Steuben County. The Corning Visitor's Bureau is interested in collaborating on future Farm Guides for the county, including bringing it online as an interactive guide to local foods in Steuben County. Steuben County Public Health will continue to promote the farmers' markets to employees and Steuben County residents, and the County Agencies and municipalities are committed to continuing to support the presence and growth of farmers' markets in the county, understanding the economic, community capital-building, and health benefits of farmers' markets for Steuben County residents.

**5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?**

No contractors used

**6. Have you publicized any results yet?\***

No results have been published yet; the project was mentioned in the 2015 and 2016 CCE Steuben Annual Reports, but results have not yet been shared. Now that the grant and report are complete, the results will be shared in-person and electronically with the Steuben County Legislature (17 members) in January 2017.

**7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?**

**i. If so, how did you collect the information?**

Information was collected through conversations with farmers, county agencies, and the Legislature. No formal surveys were conducted.

**ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?**

The Steuben County Legislature Agriculture, Industry, and Planning Committee has expressed interest in this project, and a commitment to local foods in the community, throughout the project year. The producers were extremely happy to participate in the winter markets and expand their marketing opportunity to a year-long venture. Linwood Ford, a farmer who grew his operation because of this project, shared, “my farm is located in Campbell and I produce a variety of vegetables for a roadside stand. After the creation and promotion of the winter markets I expanded sales to the farmers’ markets. As a result of this collaboration, I have diversified my product offering, participated in more marketing options, and have promoted my business in new and innovative ways.” Several other producers have reported that they have increased sales due to both the market opportunity and promotion and the classes on EBT/ SNAP benefits. Parulski Farms attended the classes offered by CCE Steuben and began accepting benefits as a result. This allowed their farm to increase sales by 15%. They were very pleased to be a part of this project.

**8. Budget Summary:**

**i. As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: ☒**

**ii. Did the project generate any income? No.**

**9. Lessons Learned:**

**i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).**

The project overall was a great success for our community. Through experience and education, CCE Steuben became aware of the many difficulties of a market accepting the EBT/SNAP benefits rather than individual farms. After that was recognized, CCE Steuben was able to still meet the goals of the project by shifting the role to each individual farmer rather than the entire market. This allowed the farmers to use the EBT/SNAP machines at multiple markets and increased access to low income residents in more locations throughout the county.

The project also developed a streamlined marketing plan for the farmers’ markets. The residents were surveyed randomly about how they found out about the markets and this helped guide the marketing plan to become more effective and timely. This plan can continue to be utilized after the grant period has ended. Other markets can also utilize the plan.

Staffing was a challenge for this project, as two Local Foods Educators hired were not successful in their positions, leaving the project with a staffing change midway through the project, and understaffed for the last 6 months of the grant. Stephanie Mehlenbacher took on an increased role in the project as a result. Fortunately, many grant objectives

had been met prior to the last 6 months of the project, so we were still able to accomplish all we set out to do.

ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:**

Goals and outcomes were achieved. However, one lesson learned was to always remain flexible and be able to problem solve because there were issues to overcome, such as the EBT/SNAP benefits service. CCE Steuben found a way to adjust the original plan and still make this happen.

iii. **Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:**

It is beneficial to hire someone with local food connections and long-term potential in the Local Foods Educator position, and to plan for sustainable funding to attract high-quality candidates for the project.

We also found it challenging to identify market managers who could handle the role without being overwhelmed by the duties associated with managing a market. Providing significant up front training and support for market managers, or producers serving as market managers, will be critical for other projects. Relatedly, if some funds can be identified to pay market managers for their time and effort, this would make the position more appealing to producers or current market volunteers. Alternatively, creating a collaborative market management approach with an agreed-upon structure, where vendors take turns with market management duties, might be successful.

**10. Future Work:**

i. **How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.**

The markets initiated through the FMPP grant are continuing in 2017. The Bath Winter Market has moved from the VA Medical Center to the Bath Fire Hall, which is a more centrally located, downtown location across the street from the Bath County Office Building, to capture a different customer base. The Painted Post Farmers Market is continuing to grow into the second season. All markets have increased vendor numbers as well as market attendance, and anticipate continuing to do so in future years as interest in and awareness of the markets grows.

The Steuben County/Corning Visitor's Bureau has expressed an interest in partnering with CCE Steuben to continue Local Foods Promotion. We will collaborate with them to continue to publish the Steuben County Farm Guide, including an online, interactive guide for consumers and visitors to the area.

With the recent development of the *New York State Grown and Certified* Standard, we anticipate working with farmers and farmers' markets to pursue and promote this standard, aimed at supporting locally grown products

ii. **Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?**

CCE Steuben intends to continue providing trainings and holding activities that will advance FMPP project goals. Horticulture Educator Stephanie Mehlenbacher will hold



increased market readiness trainings, GAPs food safety training, farm to institution networking events, and other training & networking opportunities.